

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A process for preparing a serine-rich protein comprising the steps of culturing a bacterium containing *cysK* gene and a gene encoding the serine-rich protein in a culture medium thereby producing the serine-rich protein; and harvesting the serine-rich protein,

wherein the serine-rich protein contains cysteine less than or the same as average cysteine content in cellular proteins of the bacterium; and

wherein said bacterium is transformed with a vector containing the *cysK* gene and a vector containing the gene encoding the serine-rich protein.

2. (currently amended): A process for preparing a serine-rich protein comprising the steps of culturing a bacterium containing *cysK* gene and a gene encoding the serine-rich protein in a culture medium thereby producing the serine-rich protein; and harvesting the serine-rich protein,

wherein the serine-rich protein contains cysteine less than or the same as average cysteine content in cellular proteins of the bacterium; and

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wherein said bacterium is transformed with a vector containing both the *cysK* gene and the gene encoding the serine-rich protein.

3. (canceled).

4. (original): The process according to claim 1, wherein the *cysK* gene is derived from *E. coli*.

5. (canceled).

6. (currently amended): The process according to claim 1, wherein the serine-rich protein is leptin or IL-12p40 (interleukin 12 β chain).

Claims 7 -10. (canceled)

11. (previously presented): The process according to claim 2, wherein the *cysK* gene is derived from *E. coli*.

Claims 12 - 14. (canceled).

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15. (currently amended): The process according to claim 2, wherein the serine-rich protein is leptin or IL-12p40 (interleukin 12 β -chain).

16. (canceled)